REMARKS

Claims 1-33 are pending herein.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 8, 11, 15 and 17 are amended to more clearly distinguish the invention of the claims over the teachings of the prior art references cited against these claims.

No new matter is added by this Amendment. Support for the amendments to the claims may be found in the original specification and claims. In particular, support for the language added to the claims may be found in the original specification, at, for example, pages 6-7.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Specifically, the amendments to the claims more clearly define the invention without further limiting the claims. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 23, 26, 29 and 32 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claim and any intervening claims.

II. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,170,007 (hereinafter "Venkatraman") in

view of U.S. Patent No. 6,021,429 (hereinafter "Danknick"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1, 8, 15 and 17 recite, in part, that the selected terminal transmits a request to the other interconnected terminals to obtain information on the other interconnected terminals, the other interconnected terminals forward the information on the other interconnected terminals in response to the request, and the selected terminal then forwards to the controller the information from the other interconnected terminals and information on the selected terminal.

Independent claim 11 recites, in part, requesting means for (1) requesting the other terminals to obtain information on the other terminals, wherein the other terminals forward the information on the other terminals in response to the request, and (2) for forwarding the obtained information on the other terminals to the terminal.

The Office Action acknowledges that Venkatraman does not teach the claimed features of at least two of the terminals each adapted to obtain information on the other terminals therefrom, requesting means for requesting the selected terminal to transmit, to the controller, information on all the interconnected terminals; wherein the selected terminal transmits a request to the other interconnected terminal to obtain the information on the other terminals, receives the information from the other terminals, and forwards to the controller the information from the other terminals and information on the selected terminal. However, the Office Action asserts that Danknick teaches these claimed features.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Office Action's interpretation of Danknick. Danknick fails to teach or suggest at least the feature including a request to other terminals to obtain information on the other terminals, wherein the other terminals forward the information on the other terminals in response to the request, as claimed in independent claims 1, 8, 11, 15 and 17.

In paragraph 12 A) of the Office Action, the Patent Office refers to col. 8, lines 29-64 of Danknick and alleges that "Venkatraman-Danknick teach the system as claimed wherein the system administrator, i.e. the user, may manually change or update device addresses to be accessed." Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Here, Danknick teaches, "using CPUTIL, the network administrator can remotely access the list of device addresses in NEB2, and update the list of device addresses manually." See col. 8, lines 45-48.

Independent claims 1, 8, 11, 15 and 17 do not recite that the user may manually change or update device addresses to be accessed. Rather, the feature as recited in claims 1, 15 and 17, is that one of the terminals is selected based on a user's designation. This is nowhere taught or suggested by Danknick.

Further, Danknick teaches that after NEB2 is designated as the list manager for LAN 1, NEB2 monitors LAN1 for requests for the list manager broadcasted by other network devices. In response to the request, NEB2 identifies itself as list manager by transmitting an identification signal including NEB2's device address over the LAN. See col. 9, line 61 through col. 10, line 7 of Danknick. The other network device provides its device address to a list manager when the stored device address of the list manager stored in the other network device does not match the device address provided in response to the broadcasted request for the list manager, or alternatively when no list manager device address is stored. See col. 12, lines 20-38 of Danknick. When the stored device address of the list manager stored in the other network device matches the device address provided in response to the broadcasted request for the list manager, a request for the list manager is rebroadcast and the processing shown in Fig. 5A is repeated. See col. 12, lines 24-28 and lines 58-62 of Danknick.

Accordingly, in Danknick, NEB2 does not transmit a request to obtain the information on the other terminals. NEB2 merely transmits an identification signal as list manager

including NEB2's device address over the LAN. Thus, Danknick does not teach or suggest the subject matter of claims 1, 8, 11, 15 and 17.

The Patent Office alleges in paragraph 12 B) of the Office Action that the list manager of Venkatraman-Danknick transmits a message to other terminals identifying itself as the list manager. Applicant submits that the "message" or identification signal in Danknick is completely different from the "request" to obtain the information on the other terminals recited in claims 1, 8, 11, 15 and 17.

For example, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word "message" as "a communication in writing, in speech or by signals" while the word "request" is defined as "the act or an instance for asking for something." As is clearly noted in Danknick, the word "request" is specifically used in the case where NEB2 receives a request for the list manager, but the word "request" is not used where NEB2 identifies itself as list manager. Danknick uses the words "an identification signal" rather than "request". See col. 9, line 64 through col. 10, line 3.

Accordingly, Danknick does not teach or suggest that the selected terminal transmits (or that the requesting means makes) a request to the other interconnected terminals to obtain the information on the other terminals, as recited in claims 1, 8, 11, 15 and 17.

The Patent Office further alleges in paragraph 12 B) of the Office Action that the terminals on the network await the message prior to transmitting status information and that the terminals, upon receiving the message from the list manager, respond to the message by transmitting to the list manager various information.

However, Danknick teaches the stored device address of the list manager stored in the other network device matches the device address provided in response to the broadcasted request for the list manager, the other network device does not provide its device address to the list manager (NEB2).

Conversely, the other terminals defined by claims 1, 8, 11, 15 and 17 forward the information on the other terminals in response to the request from the selected terminals.

Based on the foregoing described differences between the claimed features of the present invention and Danknick, the present invention has an advantage in reduced network loads and simpler operation for obtaining the information on the terminals on the network. More specifically, in Danknick, the device addresses on the network are available through the following operation between PC26 and the network: (1) broadcasting a request over LAN1 for the list manager; (2) receiving a response to the request from NEB2; (3) broadcasting a request over LAN1 for the list of device addresses in NEB2; and (4) receiving the list of device addresses from NEB2. See col. 13, lines 58-65 of Danknick.

Accordingly, two round operations between PC26 and the network are needed in Danknick, while one round operation between a controller and terminals is sufficient in the present invention because the controller directly requests the selected terminal to obtain information on terminals. Thus, according to the present invention, the network load can be reduced.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Venkatraman and Danknick, whether taken singularly or in combination, would not have led one of ordinary skill in the art to the invention of independent claims 1, 8, 11, 15 and 17 or any of depending claims 2-7, 9, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31 and 33. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are thus respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-33 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 8, 2003

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